UNITED NATIONS

Framework Convention on Climate Change

Distr.
GENERAL

FCCC/SBI/2000/INF.1
10 May 2000

ENGLISH ONLY

SUBSIDIARY BODY FOR IMPLEMENTATION
Twelfth session
Bonn, 12-16 June 2000
Item 8 (b) of the provisional agenda

NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM PARTIES NOT INCLUDED IN ANNEX I TO THE CONVENTION

PROVISION OF FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Activities to facilitate the provision of financial and technical support to non-Annex I Parties for the preparation of national communications

Note by the secretariat

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The activities of the secretariat to facilitate the provision of financial and technical support to non-Annex I Parties for the preparation of national communications are mandated by Article 8.2 (e) of the Convention and various decisions by the Conference of the Parties (COP) (see decisions 3/CP.2, 10/CP.2, 12/CP.4 and 8/CP.5).[1]

2. In particular, decision 10/CP.2 requests the secretariat "to facilitate assistance to Parties, particularly developing country Parties, in the preparation of their initial communications, through the organization of workshops at the regional level; to provide a forum for the exchange of experiences in the development of emission factors and activity data for the estimation of the inventory, as well as, on request, for other elements of information in the initial communication; and to provide a report to the Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI) and the Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) at each of their sessions".

---

[1] For the full texts of decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties at its second , fourth and fifth sessions, see documents FCCC/CP/1996/15/Add.1, FCCC/CP/1998/16/Add.1 and FCCC/CP/1999/6/Add.1 respectively.

3. The present progress report covers the activities undertaken by the secretariat since the eleventh sessions of the subsidiary bodies (Bonn, 25 October to 5 November 1999).

4. Sections II A and II B provide a short update on the preparation of national communications by non-Annex I Parties[2]. Sections II C to II I summarize the activities of the secretariat to facilitate assistance to Parties, including activities to facilitate the work of the consultative group of experts, regional workshops and expert group meetings, information exchange, training, National Communications Support Programme (NCSP) activities, and other relevant activities. Section III contains conclusions on problems, constraints, issues and lessons common to non-Annex I Parties during the preparation of their initial national communications.

II. ACTIVITIES OF THE SECRETARIAT

A. Status of preparation of initial national communications

5. Based on the information provided by non-Annex I Parties and the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and the responses to a questionnaire sent out by the secretariat in April 2000 and other questionnaires distributed earlier, the status of preparation of initial national communications is briefly summarized as follows:

(a) *Communications submitted.* As of April 2000, 25 initial national communications have been received from the following Parties: Jordan, Argentina, Uruguay, Senegal, the Federated States of Micronesia, Mexico, the Republic of Korea, Zimbabwe, Armenia, Kazakhstan, Mauritius, Egypt, Georgia, Uzbekistan, Indonesia, Cook Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, Samoa, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Lebanon, Chile, El Salvador and Lesotho;

(b) In addition, Argentina, the Federated States of Micronesia and Uruguay have submitted an addendum to their initial national communications;

(c) *Communications under preparation.* The majority of non-Annex I Parties (100 Parties) are presently engaged in preparing their national communications;

(d) *Approved projects.* Five non-Annex I Parties have recently received approval for funding from the GEF for the preparation of their initial national communications;

---

[2] A more detailed overview of the status of preparation of initial national communications of non-Annex I Parties will be made available on a regular basis in the UNFCCC secretariat web site from September 2000 onwards. This table will summarize the responses of non-Annex I Parties to a questionnaire regularly distributed by the secretariat, as well as information provided by the Global Environment Facility, its implementing agencies and bilateral programmes.

(e) *Projects under preparation*. Three non-Annex I Parties are currently preparing project proposals for GEF funding;

(f) *Activities to be initiated*. Three non-Annex I Parties indicated that they have not yet initiated activities to prepare their national communications, and seven non-Annex I Parties have yet to provide any information relating to the preparation of their national communications.

B. Status of preparation of second national communications

6. One Party (Uruguay) has submitted a project proposal for the second national communication, while two Parties (Mexico and Senegal) have expressed their intention to initiate activities for preparing their second national communications.

7. Five Parties (Egypt, El Salvador, Georgia, Uzbekistan and Zimbabwe) have submitted project proposals for interim funding of enabling activities Phase II, which will strengthen activities initiated in the preparation of initial national communications and may lead to project proposals for the second national communications.

C. Support to the consultative group of experts on national communications from Parties not included in Annex I to the Convention

8. As mandated by decision 8/CP.5, paragraph 5, the UNFCCC secretariat has been facilitating the establishment of the consultative group of experts on national communications from non-Annex I Parties. According to the annex to that decision, the main objective of the group is to improve the process of preparation of national communications by non-Annex I Parties.

9. The five experts representing the Latin America and the Caribbean region, the six experts from Annex I Parties and the three experts representing organizations with relevant experience in national communications from non-Annex I Parties, have been appointed. The secretariat has been informed that the African regional group will nominate its experts shortly. Consultations are under way in the Asia and the Pacific group, and it is expected that nomination would be made during the first two days of the pre-sessional week of the twelfth sessions of the subsidiary bodies.

10. The first meeting of the consultative group is scheduled for 8 and 9 June 2000 in Bonn, Germany. An oral report of this meeting will be made to the SBI at its twelfth session.

11. The secretariat will facilitate the organization of three regional workshops per year. The first workshop is scheduled for 8 to 12 May 2000 in Mexico City, Mexico. A report on this workshop will also be made available to the SBI at its twelfth session.

12. An email LISTSERV, intended to facilitate the discussions of the consultative group, has been established and is maintained by the secretariat. Members of the list include the experts nominated by the Parties, the three experts from organizations with relevant experience selected by the secretariat, and secretariat staff.

D. Regional workshops and expert group meetings

13. During the eleventh sessions of the subsidiary bodies, and in response to decision 10/CP.2, paragraph 1 (a) the secretariat organized the "Third Forum on Emission Factors and Activity Data of Greenhouse Gas Inventories of non-Annex I Parties". The forum discussed project concept notes on the improvement of the quality of local and regional emission factors and activity data developed in a previous workshop held from 4 to 6 August 1999 in Accra, Ghana (FCCC/SBI/1999/INF.6). The participants also discussed a technical paper on "Comparative analysis of emission factors and activity data used in the estimation of GHG emissions in the land-use change and forestry and energy sectors by some developing countries" (FCCC/TP/1999/3), and shared their experience.

14. In addition, the secretariat has also contributed to the following workshops:

(a) Regional workshop for the Arab States on GHG Inventory, organized by the Gulf Cooperation Council in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, from 14 to 16 November 1999. The main objective of the workshop was to provide an opportunity for delegates to exchange experience in the preparation of GHG inventories. Statements reflected the regional efforts in addressing climate change issues, and expressed concern about the adverse impacts of response measures on the countries in the region. The secretariat made two presentations. The first focused on the guidelines for the preparation of initial national communications, and the second on issues and problems related to the preparation of GHG inventories. The workshop recommended that efforts be made to facilitate assistance to countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council[3] in preparing various elements of their national communications through participation in workshops organized by the UNFCCC secretariat;

(b) United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Workshop on "Initial National Communications: Lessons Learnt and Best Practices", held in Nairobi, Kenya, from 14 to 15 December 1999. This workshop was addressed to Parties that have submitted their initial national communications. Its main objectives were to: (a) exchange experience in solving various problems related to the preparation of initial national communications; and (b) identify further activities required for maintaining and improving the quality and comprehensiveness of national communications pursuant to recent decisions of the COP. Apart from providing comments on the agenda and on the organization of work of the workshop, the secretariat made presentations on the preparation of initial national communications, and on decisions of COP 4 and COP 5 of relevance to developing countries;

---

[3] Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

(c) During the meeting on "Effects of Climate Change in Developing Countries", organized by Germanwatch, a non-governmental organization, in Bonn, 7 February 2000, the secretariat made a presentation on adaptation issues within the framework of the UNFCCC intergovernmental process, with particular focus on the preparation of national communications. This workshop was addressed to development agencies, non-governmental organizations and some developing countries. Its main aim was to identify how different actors, including research institutes, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, could assist developing countries in assessing their vulnerability to climate change, and to identify adaptation options;

(d) Twelfth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean, held in Bridgetown, Barbados, from 2 to 7 March 2000. The secretariat made a presentation focusing on issues related to non-Annex I Parties' implementation of the Convention, and, in particular, the role of preparing the national communication in strengthening planning capacity. The secretariat also stressed its efforts to facilitate developing country Parties' participation in negotiations and provided feedback on decisions of COP 5 relevant to the Parties of the region. The main objectives of this workshop were to: (a) better incorporate environmental concerns into national development planning; (b) improve implementation of multilateral environment agreements, in particular on climate change; and (c) address priorities established by the Ministers within the framework of the Regional Action Plan and the Agenda of the Forum of Ministers.

E. CC:FORUM

15. The eleventh meeting of CC:FORUM was held on 28 October 1999 in Bonn, Germany, in conjunction with the eleventh sessions of the subsidiary bodies. CC:FORUM is an informal consultative group involving Parties, United Nations agencies, regional, international and intergovernmental agencies, and bilateral and multilateral financial and technical cooperation programmes. It provides a platform for stakeholders to exchange views on technical and financial support to non-Annex I Parties for the implementation of the Convention and for the preparation of national communications.

16. Representatives from Chile, Georgia, Lebanon and Uzbekistan made presentations on the main lessons learned from the preparation of their initial national communications. They also highlighted their plans to continue the climate change activities beyond the initial national communications. Presentations were followed by a panel discussion on the priority areas for future work and the assistance needed beyond the preparation of the initial national communications.

F. Information exchange

17. The secretariat has continued to disseminate the CC:INFO/Web Tutorial Kit 1.0 on CD-ROM. The CC:INFO/Web initiative was designed to encourage Parties to develop national web sites on climate change and the implementation of the Convention, and to foster the growth of a network of such sites for sharing information and ideas. This CD-ROM contains a step-by-step tutorial kit and key software.

18. As of 25 April 2000, 20 non-Annex I Parties have linked their national web sites to that of the secretariat. These are: Belize, Brazil, Egypt, El Salvador, Georgia, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, the Marshall Islands, Mexico, Panama, the Republic of Moldova, Senegal, Seychelles, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, the United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In addition, more than 40 non-Annex I Parties have proposed to develop a national web site as part of their GEF funded enabling activity projects. Parties are welcome to provide the secretariat with the addresses of their national web sites so that they can be linked to that of the secretariat.

19. Information relevant to the facilitation of assistance for the preparation of national communications by non-Annex I Parties, such as links to relevant sites, training material and technical papers, is being made available under the page describing the activities of the Non-Annex I Implementation Subprogramme (please refer to www.unfccc.int/program/nimp1.html)

20. The secretariat has also continued to make available on its web site the full text of the national communications that have been submitted electronically. At present, 19 initial national communications from non-Annex I Parties are available on the web site. These are: Armenia, Egypt, El Salvador, Georgia, Indonesia, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kiribati, Mauritius, Mexico, the Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, the Republic of Korea, Samoa, Senegal, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu and Zimbabwe.

21. The secretariat is seeking to improve the Parties' access to its data and information. An Internet-based database on the roster of experts has been made available on a password-protected basis. The roster database can be searched by country, existing data updated and data on new experts added. It is proposed that this approach will be expanded to other data based on experience gained with the roster of experts database.

22. A new project that seeks to improve the Parties' access to data and information in the French language has been initiated. It will develop a French language gateway or "portal" that will provide information about the Convention process, the secretariat and other sources of information in French. In addition, it will guide the Parties to all documents in the French language.

G. Training

23. CC:TRAIN, a joint initiative of the UNFCCC secretariat and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), has continued to provide training services and support to non-Annex I Parties in implementing the UNFCCC.

24. After officially completing its Phase II at COP 5, thanks to the support of the Government of Switzerland, CC:TRAIN is now continuing to provide training services at cost to requesting Parties and is planning for a Phase III of its project life. The programme will focus on developing training materials and certificate courses to anticipate Parties' needs as they move along in the UNFCCC process. CC:TRAIN will also be introducing an innovative training approach through computer-based distance learning. While continuing to support developing countries in completing their national communications, CC:TRAIN will also focus on integrating climate change into national development policies and other environmental issues.

25. CC:TRAIN has continued to respond to countries' requests to conduct thematic workshops. A workshop on "Inventory and Mitigation Analysis" was organized from 29 November to 3 December 1999 in Tehran, Iran, while another on "Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment" is scheduled on 5 to14 June 2000. In addition, at the request of the climate change project in Cambodia, CC:TRAIN conducted a workshop on "National Greenhouse Gases Inventory" in Phnom Penh from 29 November to 3 December 1999. From 27 to 28 April 2000, it will also conduct a training workshop on "Preparing National Communications". Discussions are under way to organize workshops on "Preparing a Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment" and "Preparing a Mitigation Analysis" for the Cambodian country team. Ethiopia also requested CC:TRAIN to organize a workshop on "Mitigation Analysis". This was held in Addis Ababa from 21 to 25 February 2000. The Ethiopian team may also benefit from a workshop on "Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment", yet to be scheduled.

26. The certificate course on "Vulnerability and Adaptation Assessment" developed in partnership with the South Pacific Regional Environment Programme and the International Global Change Institute was first offered at the University of the South Pacific, Fiji, from 14 June to 1 October 1999. The University is planning to repeat the course from 26 June to 13 October 2000. In addition, the University of Mexico has agreed to launch the same course, subject to fund-raising. CC:TRAIN is also planning to transfer the course to the Blaustein Institute for Desert Research in Israel and the University of Zimbabwe. Building on the success of this certificate course, CC:TRAIN is exploring possible partnerships with the Energy and Development Research Centre at the University of Cape Town, South Africa and the Asian Institute of Technology in Bangkok, Thailand to develop a similar course on "Mitigation Analysis".

H. National Communications Support Programme (NCSP)

27. The secretariat has continued to play an active role in the NCSP, by co-chairing its advisory committee and by ensuring that the needs of non-Annex I Parties are fully addressed in the implementation of the programme.

28. The NCSP, jointly implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNEP and funded by the GEF, was initiated in late 1998 to provide technical assistance to non-Annex I Parties for preparing their initial national communications and fulfilling their commitments to the UNFCCC. Through its work with more than a hundred countries, the Support Programme is contributing to developing national capacity to deal with key climate change issues. The technical assistance provided to countries includes thematic workshops on greenhouse gas inventories, abatement options analysis, and vulnerability and adaptation assessment.

29. The Support Programme has conducted 15 thematic workshops in almost all subregions. Six other thematic workshops will be organized by the end of 2000. As a result of these thematic workshops, several concerns have been raised as to how best to address such themes in the near future. These include: vulnerability and adaptation assessment as well as land-use change and forestry issues in Central America, the development of regional climate scenarios in the Caribbean, emission factors in Eastern Europe and the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, and guidelines for adaptation and socio-economic impacts in the Arab States. The Support Programme follows a flexible approach that promotes country-driven discussions and strengthens input from national experts in the implementation of their activities.

30. The Support Programme will also be organizing a series of regional workshops during the year 2000. These workshops will allow countries to take a more comprehensive look at priority issues identified at the thematic workshops in order to assess ways to improve the national communications process.

31. Another important activity of the Support Programme is the technical assistance provided to countries through the hotline. Country requests vary from general issues such as project management, to very specific technical questions such as the use of a particular model for the implementation of their studies. Feedback on the components of draft national communications is also provided to countries upon request. These technical revisions do not in any way constitute an official endorsement of national communications. They are intended to provide feedback for improving technical studies and national communications before submission to the UNFCCC secretariat.

32. Information exchange among countries is another important component of the Support Programme. A quarterly newsletter, a web site, and an electronic LISTSERV have been developed for this purpose. Inputs from non-Annex I Parties are critical to ensure that the programme is addressing countries' needs and priorities in preparing their national

communications. Through the newsletter, national experts can publish short articles on their climate change studies that may be of global interest. Fifteen countries have already published in the five editions of this newsletter. The newsletter is available in English, French and Spanish.

33. The LISTSERV has been developed to facilitate the exchange of information among experts. Countries are encouraged to make use of the server, as this constitutes an effective way of seeking advice on particular issues and providing feedback on an *ad hoc* basis. The requests that countries have posted on the LISTSERV range from calls for consultants to asking for information on models.

34. The Support Programme's web site (www.undp.org/cc/) also disseminates information on climate change and national communications and provides links to other sites, including regional and national web sites. Electronic discussion groups may be developed through this web site, possibly by region. This initiative, along with strengthening the use of the LISTSERV, seeks to enhance information exchange on the preparation of national communications, as well as to facilitate discussions in preparation for the regional workshops.

35. As countries complete their national communications and the Support Programme carries out its different activities, new issues and priorities are identified. The active participation of project coordinators and national experts is needed to ensure that countries' priorities are met and that national capacities on climate change are enhanced.

I. Other activities

36. Pursuant to decision 12/CP.4, the secretariat has developed a small database containing a "List of projects submitted by non-Annex I Parties in accordance with Article 12.4 of the Convention". From September 2000 onwards, the list of projects will be made available on the UNFCCC secretariat web site, on a regular basis, through a user-friendly interface with special search facilities.

37. Also pursuant to decision 12/CP.4, the UNFCCC secretariat has been in close consultation with the GEF secretariat on the GEF review of enabling activities on climate change. This included comments on different materials and on a questionnaire being prepared by the GEF monitoring and evaluation staff. Discussions took place during a visit to the UNFCCC secretariat of the GEF secretariat monitoring and evaluation staff, who included the team leader for the GEF review of enabling activities on climate change.

38. The secretariat has continued to provide comments on all GEF enabling activities project proposals, particularly on their consistency with the Convention and with the guidance of the COP. Additionally, the secretariat has provided technical comments on other climate change project proposals whenever possible.

39. The secretariat has, in addition, attended the "GEF Workshop on Good Practices in Country Level Coordination", organized by the GEF secretariat in Washington DC, from 14 to15 March 2000. The objectives of this workshop were to respond to a GEF Council request to appraise information and to exchange views on mechanisms for strengthening coordination of GEF-related matters at the country level. Outputs of the workshop include possible policy guidelines on how countries may improve the effectiveness of the GEF operational focal points and national level coordination. The UNFCCC secretariat's presentation addressed three main issues: (a) national coordination for project elaboration, monitoring and implementation; (b) coordination of financial and technical assistance for different projects and activities; and (c) synergies among different environment conventions. The secretariat, on request, provided an overview of the main decisions and outcomes of COP 5 of relevance to the workshop discussions.

40. Finally, the secretariat has continued to respond promptly to frequent requests by non-Annex I Parties for advice or guidance related to financial and technical support for the implementation of their enabling activities. Copies of initial national communications submitted by non-Annex I Parties have also been made available on request.

III. CONCLUSIONS

41. The number of initial national communications submitted has almost doubled from 13 to 25, since the last UNFCCC secretariat report of August 1999. Most non-Annex I Parties have yet to submit their initial national communications, but a majority of these communications are expected within this year.

42. Some of the countries that have submitted their initial national communications have expressed interest in starting the process of preparing second national communications and have requested financial assistance from the GEF to strengthen activities initiated in the preparation of initial national communications.

43. The secretariat has been facilitating work on the establishment of the consultative group of experts. Members of the group are being appointed. The first regional workshop for the Latin America and Caribbean countries is scheduled and an electronic LISTSERV has been made available for the group representatives. The group is expected to have its first meeting during the week preceding the twelfth sessions of the subsidiary bodies.

44. The "Third Forum on Emission Factors and Activity Data of Greenhouse Gas Inventories of non-Annex I Parties" concluded that the main problems encountered in the preparation of GHG inventories are data availability and reliability, the lack or insufficiency of national capacity for data collection, classification, management and analysis and the need for developing local emission factors. Participants also agreed that the project concept notes on the improvement of local and regional emission factors and activity data in the energy and the land-use change and forestry sectors need to be further developed for GEF - or where appropriate, bilateral or multilateral funding.

45. Presentations and conclusions from workshops indicated that the process of preparing initial national communication constitutes a major institutional and human capacity-building effort in non-Annex I Parties. Parties acknowledged that national communications are an important tool for developing national climate change strategy and for incorporating climate change concerns into planning. Countries' presentations also showed that the process of preparing initial national communications has allowed them to develop varying and unique national institutional arrangements, such as national climate change committees, project management units, project steering committees and technical working groups. Parties have stressed the need to continue financial and technical assistance for the preparation of initial national communications.

46. All workshops identified the need to enable developing country experts to participate more actively in international negotiations. In addition, the need to improve regional cooperation was stressed in the conclusions of the Gulf Cooperation Council GHG inventory workshop and the "Twelfth Meeting of the Forum of Ministers of the Environment of Latin America and the Caribbean".

47. The secretariat has continued to strengthen and promote information exchange activities. The secretariat web site is more interactive, providing links to other sites, training material and technical papers relevant to the preparation of national communications by non-Annex I Parties. The secretariat is planning to make some of its databases directly available on the web site and to make information available in French. Twenty non-Annex I Parties have their national web sites linked to the secretariat. The secretariat has continued to disseminate the CC:INFO/Web Tutorial Kit 1.0 on CD-ROM in order to encourage more Parties to develop and link their national web sites to that of the secretariat.

48. The CC:TRAIN programme finalized its Phase II at COP 5. It is now continuing to provide training services at cost to requesting Parties and is planning for Phase III of its project life. The programme is seeking funds to further develop its training materials and certificate courses by integrating the additional information and knowledge developed at regional and national levels and by anticipating Parties' needs as they move along in the UNFCCC process.

49. The NCSP has continued to provide assistance to non-Annex I Parties through the organization of thematic and regional workshops, the provision of direct technical assistance, and the development of means for exchanging information, including a newsletter, a hotline, and a web site. The NSCP has played an important role in promoting the quality, comprehensiveness and timeliness of initial national communications from non-Annex I Parties, and ensuring timely and cost-effective implementation of GEF projects on climate change enabling activities. As countries complete their national communications and the NCSP carries out its different activities, new issues and priorities for assistance are identified. There is an urgent need to ensure longer-term continuation of the NCSP in order to sustain activities initiated in the process of preparation of initial national communications. The NCSP may also play an important role in the process of preparation of second national communications.

- - - - -